

# Bangladesh Independence Day Special

## In pursuit of prosperity, development

**ABDUL HAMID**  
PRESIDENT OF BANGLADESH



Today is March 26, the Independence Day of Bangladesh. On the occasion of our great independence and National Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings and warm felicitations to my fellow countrymen living at home and abroad.

On this historic day, I recall with profound respect the architect of our independence, father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I pay my deep homage to the martyrs and valiant sons of the soil, who made the supreme sacrifice in the war of liberation. I also recall with deep reverence our four national leaders, valiant



The father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

freedom fighters, organizers, supporters, our foreign friends and people from all walks of life who made immense contributions to attain our right to self-determination in the war of liberation. The contributions of

all would be written in golden letters in the history of our independence forever.

We have achieved our hard-earned independence through huge sacrifices. Bangabandhu always cherished a dream of building a happy and prosperous country along with achieving political emancipation. Immediately after independence, he had taken all-out steps in rebuilding the economy of the war-ravaged country. Keeping that in mind, the present government has been rendering untiring efforts in materializing the dream of Bangabandhu. After a long struggle, Bangladesh is now moving toward development and prosperity. Besides, the overall development, the implementation of mega-projects like Padma Bridge, Metro Rail and a nuclear power plant are ongoing. With the launching of the Bangabandhu-1 satellite, we have cemented our place in space. We are dreaming of a developed Bangladesh by the year

2041. Bangladesh is now being branded as a role model for outstanding success in socio-economic development.

In pursuing our diplomatic objectives, the government has been consistent in upholding the principle of "friendship to all, malice towards none" as enunciated by the father of the nation. Our achievement in the international arena is also commendable. Our expatriate Bangladeshis have also been making significant contributions to our national economy through sending their hard-earned remittances home. Nevertheless, we have a long way to go for achieving the desired goals of independence. We must ensure good governance, social justice, transparency and accountability to make the development people-oriented and sustainable.

Democracy and development complement each other. Jatiya Sangsad (the national parliament) and the government



Buddha Dhatu Jodi, also known as the Bandarban Golden Temple, is the largest Theravada Buddhist temple in Bangladesh. The temple is located in Bandarban district in the south-eastern part of the country. EMBASSY OF BANGLADESH

have started the new journey after the 11th parliamentary elections. Collective initiative is necessary to implement the development ideas of the government and make the parliament meaningful. I hope the national parliament will become the center of the hopes and aspirations of the people. For this, the ruling party, as well as the opposition, would have to play constructive roles. The present government has set "Vision 2021" and "Vision 2041," respectively, to material-

ize Bangabandhu's dream of transforming Bangladesh into Sonar Bangla (Golden Bangladesh). Sincere and collective efforts are imperative to implement the programs.

Imbued with the spirit of the war of liberation and democratic values, let us work together irrespective of party affiliation to make our hard-earned independence more meaningful. Let this be the pledge of our independence and national day.

*Khoda Hafez, may Bangladesh live forever.*

## Projected benchmarks achieved in all sectors throughout the past decade

**SHEIKH HASINA**  
PRIME MINISTER OF BANGLADESH



I convey my heartiest greetings and congratulations to my countrymen, as well as all expatriate Bangladeshis, on the occasion of the great Independence and National Day of Bangladesh.

March 26 is the day of earning self-identity for our nation. It's the day of breaking the shackles of subjugation. On the eve of independence day, I recall with deep gratitude the greatest Bangalee of all time, father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Muji-

bur Rahman, under whose undisputed leadership we earned our coveted independence. I pay my deep homage to the 3 million martyrs and 200,000 women who lost their honor in the war of liberation. I also pay my tribute to the four national leaders who steered the war of liberation in the absence of Bangabandhu. My homage goes to the valiant freedom fighters, including those wounded. I extend my sympathies to those who had lost their near and dear ones, and were subjected to brutal torture during the war. I recall with gratitude our foreign friends who had extended their wholehearted support and cooperation for the cause of our liberation.

The Bangalee nation had fought against Pakistani oppression and deprivation for long 23 years under the leadership of Bang-

abandhu. They were compelled to hold general elections in 1970. The Bangladesh Awami League led by Bangabandhu won an overwhelming majority in the elections. But the Pakistani rulers, instead of handing over the power to the majority party in a democratic way, launched repressive measures against them. Bangabandhu, in his March 7 historic address at the then-Ramna Race Course declared, "The struggle of this time is for emancipation, the struggle for this time for our independence, Joy Bangla." He instructed the Bangalee nation to resist the enemies.

The occupation forces unleashed a sudden attack and started killing innocent and unarmed Bangladeshis on the black night of March 25, 1971. They killed thousands of people in cities and towns, including

Dhaka. Bangabandhu formally proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh at the first hour of March 26, 1971. Under the brave and dauntless leadership of Bangabandhu, we earned the ultimate victory on Dec. 16, 1971, after a bloody nine-month war.

The independence earned through the supreme sacrifices of millions of people is the greatest achievement of the Bangalee nation.

Being imbued with the spirit of the freedom struggle, the Awami League government has relentlessly been working to develop the country. We have been accomplishing the unfinished work of the father of the nation. We have achieved expected developments in every sector during the last 10 years. Bangladesh has become the role model of socioeconomic develop-

ment in the world. Our government is maintaining a "zero tolerance" policy to tackle militancy, terrorism and the drug menace. For the first time in the world, we have formulated a 100-year plan named "Delta Plan 2100." Bangladesh is one of the top five countries in the world in terms of economic development. Ninety percent of development work is financed by our own resources. We have executed the verdict of the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu, establishing the rule of law. The verdicts of the trials of the war criminals are also being executed. The trials of war criminals will continue as per our pledges to the nation. Due to the continuation of the Awami League government, grass-roots people are now getting the dividend of the development.

The people made the Bangladesh Awami League victorious in the recent 11th parliamentary elections. We will fully honor the huge mandate that the people of our country have given us. We will turn Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed and prosperous one by 2041, *Insha Allah* (God willing).

Let us come and uphold the development and democratic spree being imbued with the spirit of the freedom struggle. Let us engage ourselves for the welfare of the country and nation. Let us build a hunger-, poverty-free; happy and prosperous Sonar Bangladesh (Golden Bangladesh) as dreamed by the father of the nation. On the historic day, let this be our commitment.

*Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu.*  
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

# Congratulations

on the 48th Anniversary of the Independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Himu Uddin  
President



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# Bangladesh Independence Day Special

## Internet access among major priorities

**RABAB FATIMA**  
AMBASSADOR OF BANGLADESH



I extend my warmest greetings to the readers of The Japan Times on the 48th Anniversary of the Independence and National Day of Bangladesh.

On this auspicious occasion, I pay deep homage to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the nation who led us in our movement for independence.

I convey my profound respect to Their Imperial Majesties, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and convey warmest greetings to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and friendly people of Japan.

I would like to recognize the contribution of my fellow Bangladeshis in Japan in

promoting friendly relations between our two countries. I congratulate and extend warmest felicitations to them on this happy occasion.

Japan has been one of our most important development partners since our independence. Today, this strong relationship stands firm on the foundations of a comprehensive partnership. Japan is our top export destination in Asia, and two-way bilateral trade is over \$3 billion and expanding at a steady pace. We are also encouraged to see the growing number of Japanese companies in Bangladesh, with over 280 of them now operating in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has one of the friendliest foreign investment and trade environments in the region. We are blessed with a large pool of skilled labor. The World Economic Forum's Development Index ranks Bangladesh at 34th among emerging economies, and one of the best performers

in the region. Our gross domestic product growth has remained steady at over 6 percent for the last decade, and was 7.86 percent last year. Foreign direct investment to Bangladesh is expanding significantly. One-hundred special economic zones are being developed in Bangladesh, including one exclusively for Japanese investors. I invite Japanese investors to be a part of this exciting time in Bangladesh and to take advantage of the special incentives being provided.

Our industrial sector is also witnessing rapid expansion. Bangladesh is the second-largest ready-made garment producer in the world. Japan is our largest export destination in Asia and No. 1 destination of apparel products among our non-traditional markets. Top priority has been placed on expanding internet connectivity and digitization in line with the government's "Digital Bangladesh" project is now in sight. Bangladesh is now a leading infor-

mation and communications technology (ICT) outsourcing destination, with annual export earnings in the ICT sector at over \$1 billion this year and it is expected to surpass \$5 billion by 2021.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's development and growth road maps, "Vision 2021" and "Vision 2041," place an inclusive and participatory development model at the center of all national development efforts. This has resulted in notable strides in poverty eradication, public health, education and women's advancement.

As a leading contributor to global U.N. peacekeeping, Bangladesh remains committed to promoting international peace and security. We will continue to work closely with Japan toward our shared vision and commitment to peace, stability and sustainable development in our region and on the international stage.

Long live the Japan-Bangladesh friendship!

## Steady achievements at home and internationally

**A.K. ABDUL MOMEN**  
FOREIGN MINISTER OF BANGLADESH



On the occasion of March 26, the great Independence and National Day of Bangladesh, I extend my heartfelt greetings and warm felicitations to all Bangladeshis living both home and abroad.

On this great historic day, I recall with profound reverence the greatest Bangalee of all time. Father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who proclaimed the country's independence on March 26, 1971. Under his visionary leadership, we achieved our long-cherished independence through a nine-month armed struggle.

With deep respect, I recall the supreme sacrifices made by our war heroes, the 3 million martyrs and the wounded freedom fighters. I also pay my profound gratitude to the people from all walks of life and especially the members of our diaspora and the diplomatic front who, during and after our war of liberation, played a vital role in gaining international recognition. I also acknowledge with deep gratitude the enormous contributions of our foreign friends in the emergence of an independent Bangladesh.

The charismatic leadership of the father of the nation united the whole nation like a solid rock under one umbrella. Bangabandhu was not only the leader of the Bangalee, but also a forerunner in realizing the rights of the oppressed and deprived people of the world. Bangabandhu, the great architect of our liberation war dreamed of a happy, prosperous, exploitation-free and equitable Sonar Bangla (Golden Bangladesh). His able successor, his daughter, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina aims at Ban-

gladesh becoming an upper middle-income country by 2021 and developed country by 2041. She hopes to realize Bangabandhu's dream of Sonar Bangla, a prosperous, exploitation-free, just and developed Bangladesh.

Now Bangladesh is on a pathway to prosperity. Currently, Bangladesh is marching forward with a more than 7.86 percent gross domestic product growth rate. The number of working women has increased from 6 percent to 38 percent in the workforce. The introduction of six months leave, maternity and child care allowances, establishment of free community clinics are a few critical interventions that have lowered maternal mortality by 67 percent and infant death by 75 percent.

In the last 10 years, the size of our national budget increased by more than five times. On one hand, while Bangladesh is now recognized as a role model of development, on the other, it has been steadily achieving successes, earning many international awards and accolades. As a consequence, the United Nations has recently announced Bangladesh's eligibility for graduation to the status of a developing country from the status of a least developed country. With the successful launching of the Bangabandhu-1 satellite, the first Bangladeshi geostationary communication satellite, we have embarked toward communication technology of a new height.

I congratulate all Bangladeshi diaspora in every corner of the world that are contributing to the improvement of the image of Bangladesh. I thank all the members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our missions abroad who have been working with deep commitment to uphold our national interest across nations.

On this historic day of independence, let us all vow to transform Bangladesh into a prosperous, technology-based and developed Sonar Bangla.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu. May Bangladesh live forever.

## Growing partnership marked by expanding business opportunities

**TARO ASO**  
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-BANGLADESH  
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE



On the occasion of the Independence and National Day of Bangladesh, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to the government and the people of Bangladesh on behalf

of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship League.

Since the establishment of the diplomatic relations in 1972, Japan and Bangladesh have helped each other as traditionally friendly nations who have

maintained a good relationship based on the common values of peace and democracy. I made an official visit to Bangladesh as foreign minister in July 2006 and have been working to promote friendship between the two countries as president of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship League since 2008.

I highly appreciate that the Bangladesh government has been supporting the displaced persons from the Rakhine state of Myanmar since August 2017 with maximum care from a humanitarian point of view. The Japanese government has extended approximately \$100 million through international and nongovernmental organizations over the last two years. The parliamentary league hopes that early repatriation will take place based on the agreement between Bangla-

desh and Myanmar, along with the cooperation of the United Nations. We would like to continue to support the efforts of Bangladesh.

The Bangladeshi economy maintains its stable growth with the annual growth rate of more than 7 percent, attracting many Japanese companies. The number of Japanese companies operating in Bangladesh is now more than 280. This month, the opening ceremony of the Kanchpur 2nd Bridge in the Kanchpur, Meghna, and Gumti 2nd Bridges Construction and Existing Bridges Rehabilitation Project that link Dhaka and Chittagong on the National Highway No. 1, took place with the kind presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. This project is one of the symbolic projects that represents the rapidly develop-

ing and growing relationship between Japan and Bangladesh. On behalf of the parliamentary league, I would like to express my congratulations on this opening. Moreover, Japanese companies have been awarded some of this project and I am proud that the technologies of Japan support the sustainable economic development of Bangladesh through these projects. I am looking forward to the successful completion of this project.

Japan hopes that Bangladesh will continue to advance democracy in the country, support further development and prosperity and would like to further bilateral relations. The parliamentary league will continue to contribute to it.

I would like to conclude by wishing for further prosperity of the people of Bangladesh.

## Congratulations

on the 48th Anniversary of the Independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



**SAKURA SABER**  
PRESIDENT

**SAHIDUR RAHMAN KHAN**  
VICE PRESIDENT

**SALIMULLAH KAJOL ROCKY**  
GENERAL SECRETARY

**LUTHFAR RAHMAN SHIPER**  
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## Congratulations

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# Bangladesh Independence Day Special

## Firm dedication to progress

**SHAHRIAR ALAM**  
STATE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF BANGLADESH



Today is March 26, our great Independence and National Day. This is the day of breaking shackles of subjugation; a day of reaching the enlightened world from the abyss of darkness.

On this very day in 1971, the Bangalee nation started the war of liberation against the misrule, exploitation and repression of Pakistani rule with the clarion call from our father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Pakistani occupation forces committed one of the worst genocides indiscriminately on March 25, 1971, in an attempt to silence the Bangalee nation forever. Mass killings during the liberation war are a black chapter not only in the history of Bangladesh, but also in the history of world humanity. In August 2017, the national

parliament of Bangladesh declared March 25 as National Genocide Day to commemorate the genocide carried out by Pakistani forces on the black night of March 25, 1971. Bangabandhu, the architect of Bangladesh, declared the independence of Bangladesh in the wee hours of March 26, 1971. Bangladesh made its place on the world map as an independent and sovereign state with self-esteem through the nine-month-long liberation war.

On this very day, I pay profound reverence to the great hero of the war of independence, the architect of great independence, Bangabandhu, who led his people from the front in various movements and struggles from the 1952 language movement to the 1971 liberation war to the greatest achievement of Bengali Nationalism-independent Bangladesh. With profound love and respect, I recall the supreme sacrifices made by our war heroes, the 3 million martyrs and the wounded freedom fighters.

On this historic moment, I recall the contributions of the officials of the then-Foreign Ministry who worked to build public opinion all over the world in response to the

clarion call of Bangabandhu during the liberation war.

Bangabandhu had a dream of bringing smiles to the faces of Bangalee people. He wanted to make them free from exploitation, hunger, poverty and subjugation. The daughter of our founding father, the current Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina has been leading the development pursuits of Bangladesh. Recently, the people of Bangladesh fortified their support on her with huge public support in the 11th general elections. As a result of pragmatic initiatives commenced by the Awami League government, Bangladesh has now been transformed into a trade-dependent country from an aid-dependent one. Currently, Bangladesh is marching forward with \$1,752 per capita income and a more than 7.86 percent growth rate. As a result, Bangladesh has been recognized as a role model of development.

On this auspicious day, I thank all the members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our missions abroad who have been working with sustained dedication and commitment in achieving our foreign policy objectives and promote national interest of Bangladesh on the world stage. Also, my heartfelt felicitations go to the Bangladeshi diaspora that has been contributing unceasingly to the development of our motherland by sending invaluable remittances home and brightening the image of Bangladesh globally by practicing Bangla and Bengali culture abroad.

On this glorious day, being imbued with the spirit of our great liberation war and with a view to building Bangabandhu's dream of Sonar Bangla (Golden Bangladesh), let us take a fresh vow to devote ourselves to work from our respective positions in advancing the ongoing development efforts of the present government to strengthen the hands of our prime minister and build a better world for our future generations.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu.  
May Bangladesh live forever.

*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*



Local women dance at the Boisabi Utsab, a festival in Bangladesh.

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